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ZELDA: SKYWARD SWORD

E3 2009: What Happened to Link's Sword?

Shigeru Miyamoto says the next Wii Zelda will see an even older Link... and could he be minus a sword?



BY MATT CASAMASSINA

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IGN's [Nintendo](#) Team met with Nintendo's master designer [Shigeru Miyamoto](#) at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles this week. The famed creator of the Mario and Zelda franchises spoke about all of the new each series, covered Nintendo's design philosophy, provided a few more details about Pikmin 3 and more. But he also gave us an exclusive hint about the next Zelda for Wii. Exactly what does it mean? We'll let you decide.

IGN: Great seeing you again, Mr. Miyamoto. We know that you have been trying to make your games -- even traditional ones -- appealing to a wider spectrum of audiences. In Hollywood, the same studios might make an R-rated horror movie and also work on a G-rated family movie, specifically targeting two very different demographics. Have you thought about taking this approach with your games and do you think trying to appease all players ultimately dilutes your games?

Shigeru Miyamoto: I consider myself in some respects a writer and as a creator in that vein, I don't really have anything negative to say about my own work, of course. The work that I do generally is just something that appeals to a wider range. I've produced other games that third and second-party games have developed for us that are, as you would say, focused on one particular audience and I have no problem with that whatsoever. I've done that. As to why we don't do that, as for example, Mario Paint, if we just went and honed it down, that would be a game that could be just for artists. Again, I would never say anything bad, maybe, those writers focused on making something for a specific audience, but, you know, one of the problems we face in the gaming industry is that the gaming population is shrinking. There are less people playing games. And one of our goals is to bring that back up.



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For us, the products that we make really just sort of match that goal naturally,

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so that's why we are taking that route. To further expound upon that, I think that when we are working with other developers, a lot of times they will try to come and make games that are very Nintendo-esque, and that's something that we actually ask them to stop doing. We say, if you're going to make a game with us, try to make something that really expresses your vision and what you would like to do. So we hope in the future to go ahead and work with people to again make games that are maybe more skewed toward an older audience or a more focused audience.

IGN: At your developer roundtable this week, you showed off a single piece of artwork from the next Wii Zelda game. This piece of art has not yet been released publicly, but we noticed that Link appears to have grown to full adulthood. He looks older than he did in Twilight Princess. Is that a correct assumption?

Shigeru Miyamoto: Well, the story setting for this Zelda is, of course, in a completely different era and Link is older than he was previously. More approaching adulthood. There is one hint. Maybe from the art work you can see that he's not holding a sword.

IGN: Has he lost his Master Sword?

Shigeru Miyamoto: [Laughing] I just wanted to make sure that you understand we are making it. That's all I'm going to say on that subject.

IGN: Does the game follow the story progression of Twilight Princess or is it something completely different?

Shigeru Miyamoto: I can't go into details except to say that it's something completely different.

IGN: You just mentioned that the game audience is shrinking and that Nintendo is always looking for ways to entice new players. Is this something that you're thinking about for the new Zelda, too, or is there a separation where that's off limits because the franchise is traditionally hardcore?

Shigeru Miyamoto: I think we do this with Mario and Zelda as well. When we



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are working on the plans for them, we are trying to come up with ways where we can satisfy our longtime fans and bring new players into the franchises as well. That's something we're always looking at. However, when I get involved in a title, I focus a lot on more experience and the more advanced gameplay elements. If I get into it, there's a tendency for difficulty levels to ramp up so that's something I really have to watch for myself to make sure that I don't do that.

IGN: Twilight Princess obviously started on GameCube and then came to Wii. We remember you saying that the team wanted to do more visually with the game for Wii, but ran out of time. So can we assume the visuals for this new game will set a new bar for Wii graphics?

Shigeru Miyamoto: Well, yeah, again I can't say anything in detail about the graphics in-game or anything like that. But I can tell you, as you just pointed out, that Twilight Princess was developed and ran on both hardwares while this new game will be only on Wii, so I think there are some expectations as to what it will be since we are focused on this console.

IGN: Tell us about the four-player mode in Legend of Zelda: The Spirit Tracks.

Shigeru Miyamoto: Yeah, if you remember in Phantom Hourglass we had that two-player tag. This time we're bringing four people local wireless and there will be some similar sort of tag-like gameplay. I don't want to give too much away about what the gameplay will be, but I think it will be really exciting. And there are some cooperative elements. Remember back to what, maybe, Four Swords' gameplay was like. But you won't be using any swords.

IGN: Onto Super Mario Galaxy 2. We remember a quote from you awhile back where you said that you loved the foundation created for that game, but you wanted to see it taken further. Maybe make it more difficult. Is that true?

Shigeru Miyamoto: I don't know if I want to make it more difficult or more challenging or maybe just more innovative or unique. But there were so many elements that we want to use and so many ideas that we had that we weren't able to implement last time around. So I'm hoping this is just filled with moments where players go, "Oh, hey, that's a great idea. Oh, what an interesting concept that is." And you saw in the videos that drill item that you use to drill through the different platforms and worlds and whatnot, and that's really exciting -- there's a lot of really high-action moments using that to navigate parts of the world.



IGN: We have to ask about Pikmin 3, of course. What happened to it at this year's show? Also, if we've got it right, Pikmin was the last original IP you came up with specifically for traditional gamers. Any idea when we can expect a new so-called hardcore property from you?

Shigeru Miyamoto: In regards to the IP question, I really don't consider Pikmin to be the last original IP. I look at the Miis, the Wii Sports, Nintendogs -- these are all original IPs from me. Even the island in Wii Sports Resort, I'm considering that an IP -- that island itself.

IGN: We're thinking more along the lines of a strictly hardcore title versus those you mentioned, which fall into the casual category, too.

Shigeru Miyamoto: No, I'm all dried up [laughs]. But luckily, there are lots of young and creative people at Nintendo, so I think they're really going to be driving a lot of that new original IP and yeah, we do have a lot of really great stuff that we're thinking about. And in terms of Pikmin, I've always thought of it more of an expanded audience title myself so if a longtime fans think of it as something for them and if our expanded fans think of it as something for them, well, that's great for us.

IGN: What's the status on Pikmin 3?

Shigeru Miyamoto: As you know, this year we've announced a lot of games. Amongst those there are so many that I've been deeply involved with. Wii Sports Resort, Wii Fit Plus, Super Mario Galaxy 2, New Super Mario Bros. Wii. I have just been running around extremely busy. With Pikmin 3, we've got all the basics pretty much done. Now it's just a matter of how do we go in and fill that out? What sort of work do we give our designers? That team has been constantly been moving forward. So with a little time, we'll be able to make more progress and I hope we can bring you something that will make you happy.

IGN: Have you thought about making a Wii game that uses two Wii remotes with MotionPlus?

Shigeru Miyamoto: I think if Wii Sports Resort sells really well, that's something we'd definitely like to think about. Like, table manners



something we'd definitely like to think about. Like, table manners.

IGN: We're going to suggest Marionette, the title that popped up on Nintendo release lists a long time ago and then disappeared. You use two Wii remotes to control Mario like a puppeteer.

Shigeru Miyamoto: That puppet team really still wants to work on that so maybe we've got something really cool with that.

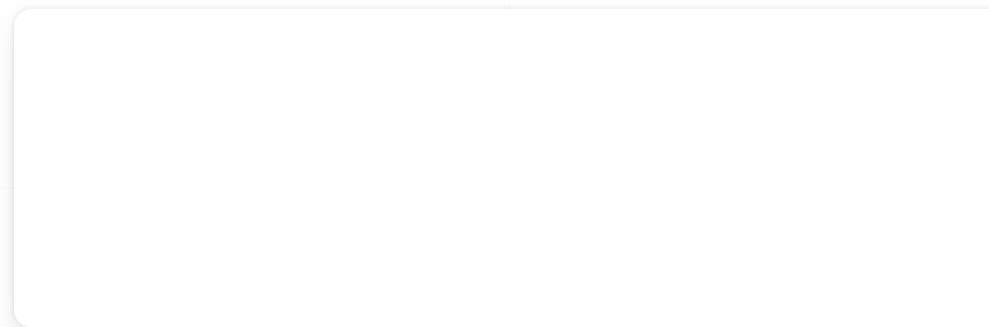
IGN: As far as DSiWare and WiiWare, is there anything you would like to do personally on those platforms?

Shigeru Miyamoto: In relation to DSiWare, Flip Note Studio is something I really wanted to do for a long time. I'm working with Mr. [Yoshiaki] Koizumi, who was the director of Super Mario Galaxy and producer of Super Mario Galaxy 2. This is a really, really innovative piece of software that allows you to create your own flip-book style animations. I hope it's got some really great tools that will allow people to be very creative.

IGN: Finally, can you tell us something cool that you haven't told anybody else?

Shigeru Miyamoto: [Laughs] I think I've told you guys stuff already that I haven't told other people. Now this is something that was just announced last night out of Japan. I don't have any solid plans outside of Japan, but we are releasing with Monster Hunter Tri a black Wii. And then there's a classic controller grip.

Thanks to Shigeru Miyamoto for the interview.



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